

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HETHERSETT V.C. MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Hethersett, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121042

Headteacher: Mr T. Strugnell

Reporting inspector: Mr C. Henderson  
23742

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 190633

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	8 to 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	22 Queens Road Hethersett Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR9 3DB
Telephone number:	01603 810498
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Steward
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> November – 6 <sup>th</sup> December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education French	How high are standards? School's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Len Shipman	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jean Peek	Team inspector	English Religious education History Music Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Angela Fraser	Team inspector	Science Information technology Art Design and technology Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hethersett V. C. Middle School is situated in an attractive, expanding village just south of Norwich. It has 271 pupils on roll, 138 boys and 133 girls, which is broadly average for a school of this type. The number of pupils has increased since the last inspection. Most pupils come from the local village or from the nearby village of Little Melton. It is an area with high employment levels. Most children come from supportive homes and parents are interested in their children's education. Attainment on entry overall is above the national average.

The pupils are mainly of white, United Kingdom or European ethnic background; only 1.1 per cent come from ethnic minority groups which is below the national average. There are 71 pupils on the register of special educational needs, three with specific statements of need, which is below the national average. 8.5 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Hethersett V.C. Middle School is a good school with many very good aspects. Pupils achieve high standards, both in academic and personal development. A clear and positive direction is given to the work of the school by the leadership of the headteacher, supported very effectively by a strong team approach and an influential governing body. The high quality of teaching and a caring supportive school ethos encourage pupils to adopt an enthusiastic and positive approach. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science is above the national average.
- It has a strong sense of community with very effective teamwork, focused on raising standards.
- Pupils have a positive, enthusiastic attitude. They are keen to learn, take pride in their work and achieve high standards in many subjects.
- Relationships are excellent. Pupils are confident, courteous and behave very well.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership, supported very well by the broad range of expertise of the governing body and a dedicated staff team.
- Good management and financial planning ensure that the school gives good value for money.
- Links with parents are good and contribute well to children's learning.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- Improve the standards in information technology and provide more opportunities for pupils to use their skills to support work in other subjects.
- Ensure more consistent use of teacher assessment to enable pupils to know what is expected to achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Extend the recent good developments in assessment procedures, particularly in relation to school and pupil target-setting.
- Ensure that teachers' lesson plans link clearly identified learning objectives to the use of assessment.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in November 1996. Significant improvements have been made in the management of the school and these are contributing substantially to improving standards. The quality of management planning and financial control has been greatly improved. The role and contribution of the governing body in managing the school has been increased. Subject co-ordinators are more involved in monitoring and evaluating the standards of teaching and learning. Good improvements have been made to the quality of the learning environment, particularly through building development and refurbishment. These have contributed to raising the morale of the school community and to the development of an effective team approach.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	B	B
mathematics	B	C	C	C
science	B	D	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These test results show that while standards in English have generally remained above average, those in science and mathematics are slightly lower than three years ago. Similar schools are those which have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The 1998 results show a dip in attainment levels, although that particular year group included an increased number of pupils with special educational needs. The 1999 results improved on the previous year with an increased number of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4. The school has set targets for this year of 78 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in English and mathematics and is on course to achieve and possibly exceed them. These realistic targets are based on current school assessment data. Additional literacy and numeracy support targeted on areas of weakness will promote improvement. Inspection evidence show that standards in English continue to be above average, with reading skills being particularly well developed. Attainment in mathematics and science is improving and standards are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 7. Good quality teaching and the effective implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies are promoting improvements. Pupils achieve high standards in a range of curriculum subjects, for example music, history and design and technology, although pupils' skills in information technology are not consistently developed. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic and keen to succeed. They are very positive in all they do and take pride in their presentation of work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both in classrooms and throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships throughout the school promote very good personal development. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility and show respect for each other and for adults.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There is a good prompt start to the day.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 8 - 11 years	aged 11 - 12 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school and is a significant factor in promoting high standards. Fifty-nine per cent of lessons observed were good and a further 21 per cent were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and ensures good progress in developing pupils' skills. Teachers manage their classes very well. They are well prepared and use a good range of teaching strategies to interest pupils and focus their attention. Assessment information is not always consistently used to ensure that the learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant and caters well for the wide range of abilities, although opportunities for information technology are not consistently developed. A very good range of school trips and extra-curricular activities enhances opportunities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Support staff are used very well to enable these pupils to make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good moral and social provision. Clear behavioural expectations and Christian values foster pupils' understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. Good provision for spiritual and cultural development, although aspects of non-European cultural beliefs and traditions are not always fully developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know their pupils well and provide good quality care and support. Assessment procedures have been developed to monitor pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy, although these are not yet being consistently used in other subjects.
How well the school works with parents	The school has good links with its parents. It works closely with them to keep them well informed and involved in their children's learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well managed. Clear, effective leadership by the headteacher gives a positive direction to the work of the school. A very good team approach encourages all staff to contribute to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A very effective and influential governing body works closely with the management team to focus on school improvement. Their involvement has improved significantly since the last inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses an increasing range of assessment data to monitor pupil performance and target areas for improvement. The management team and subject co-ordinators monitor standards of teaching and learning, and identify areas for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Good management planning is supported very well by good financial planning. The school closely monitors and compares its expenditure levels to apply the principles of best value very well. It provides good value for money. Staffing levels are good overall and fully meet the demands of the curriculum. Resources are adequate overall, although those for information technology are in need of further improvement and more frequent use. The accommodation is adequate overall. Improvements and refurbishment have contributed to creating an attractive learning environment.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of work and behaviour.</li> <li>• The school is managed well.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and helps their children to make good progress.</li> <li>• The school responds well to questions and quickly sorts out any problems.</li> <li>• Their children are encouraged to take part in a range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further improvements to the school building and site, especially to the swimming pool, design and technology block and aspects of security.</li> </ul>

Parental responses from the 121 questionnaires returned (50 per cent) and from the 28 parents (12 per cent) who attended the meeting were very supportive. There were very few concerns. Inspectors' judgements confirm the parents' positive views of the school. The governors have made significant improvements to the school building and the management plan indicates that further improvements are planned, particularly to the design and technology room.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. At the end of Key Stage 2 the results of the 1999 national tests show that attainment in English is above average nationally and compared with similar schools. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Trends over the last four years show that, although there was a dip in the school's results in 1998 due mainly to the large number of pupils with special educational needs in that year group, attainment overall has been above the national average. There was no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. The 1999 results were an improvement on previous years. The number of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 or above was above average and the number of pupils achieving higher than the expected level was also above average. The school has set realistic targets of 78 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in 2000 and 75 per cent in 2001. These are based on current assessment information on each year group and the school is likely to achieve or possibly exceed them. The school has organised additional literacy and numeracy support focused on areas of weakness to promote improvement and, where appropriate, adjust attainment targets. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in English are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. They are also above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school in Year 7. Standards in literacy are above average. Pupils use their literacy skills well, particularly their high quality reading skills, to promote good standards of work in English and in other subjects, such as history and geography. Written presentation is of a consistently good quality, supported by pupils using neat, fluent handwriting.
2. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics show that standards were close to the average nationally and to the average of similar schools. Standards have varied over the last four years although, overall, they have been maintained at the standard reported at the last inspection. Standards were below average in 1998 due to an increased number of pupils with special educational needs. Attainment levels improved in 1999, although they were not as high as in 1996 and 1997. The number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in 1999 and the number achieving higher than expected levels were close to the national average. Boys attained standards that were just above those achieved by girls. The school has set realistic targets, based on assessment data from the particular year groups, for the number of pupils achieving the national average in 2000 (78 per cent) and in 2001 (80 per cent). Both targets are above the current national average and the school is likely to achieve them. Inspection evidence shows that standards are continuing to improve and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average. It is above expected levels by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. Consistently good quality teaching, and the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly in developing pupils' mental skills, is promoting improved standards. Numeracy skills are being taught well and are resulting in pupils' increased confidence in mathematics. They use these skills effectively to solve challenging mathematical problems and investigations, particularly in Key Stage 3. Opportunities to apply them in similarly challenging activities in Key Stage 2 are less well developed.
3. Standards in science as shown in the results of the 1999 key stage tests are close to the national average and to the average of similar schools. Although the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was above average, the number achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. Standards in 1999 were above those achieved in 1998, although not as high as those reported at the last inspection. Over the

last four years, standards overall have been above the national average. There was no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in science are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. They are above expected levels by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. Pupils make good progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding, although their investigational skills are not always consistently used to enable them to achieve higher attainment levels frequently.

4. Attainment in information technology has not been maintained at the levels reported at the last inspection. It is broadly in line with standards expected nationally of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. Although many pupils have developed their skills soundly, often through using their own resources, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend these skills through regular use in school.
5. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. They have been maintained at a similar level to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is promoted well through improving links with the local church. Their knowledge of other faiths, such as Islam and Judaism, increases as pupils move through the school, although it is not sufficiently well developed to enable pupils to identify some of the key features of other major world religions.
6. Standards overall have largely been maintained since the last inspection with pupils making good progress in their learning in the core subjects and in many aspects of other curriculum subjects. Standards are high in music and in design and technology, in pupils' appreciation of the work of famous artists and in aspects of physical education, for example swimming. A good range of opportunities, supported by consistently good quality teaching, encourage pupils to adopt enthusiastic and conscientious attitudes and to achieve high standards. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress towards the clear targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils of lower ability generally make good progress with good teaching and work which is planned well to meet their needs. Pupils of average and above average ability make good progress overall. On occasions, they make very good progress in their learning, for example in aspects of mathematics and English when the learning activity challenges them effectively to use their knowledge and understanding. A significant minority of pupils frequently achieve higher than expected National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, this level of challenge is not consistently used to enable more pupils to achieve higher levels of achievement regularly.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. The overall attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good. These standards were described as good in the previous inspection and described as very good in an interim report in 1998. These standards are a strength of the school and greatly appreciated by the parents.
8. Pupils come into school in an orderly manner. Their faces are smiling and cheerful. Courtesies were extended to both colleagues and members of staff. Their appearance is smart and they show respect for each other and their belongings. Their enthusiasm is clearly evident. Prior to registration pupils enter class and quickly settle into a routine with a minimum of fuss. Some do quiet reading, others finish written work, whilst others talk confidently to their teacher. This is a good start to the day and has a positive impact on their aptitude for learning.

9. In class their standards of behaviour, respect for their teacher and responsible attitudes are maintained. The good quality of teaching helps stimulate and promote interest in the specific subjects and pupils are eager to answer questions. They are polite enough not to interrupt or speak out of turn to answer questions even if another gives an incorrect response. In group or paired work pupils work very well together, exchanging ideas, sharing resources or assisting one another. Their written work is extremely well presented and they take pride in their achievements. They work well with the minimum of supervision and are not easily distracted from their lesson objectives. These attitudes and pride in presentation have a very positive impact on raising the levels of attainment.
10. Behaviour in and around the school, including playtime, is of a similar high standard. Pupils walk steadily through corridors and further examples of good manners were observed, such as holding doors open or directing visitors to the correct rooms. In the break-times, pupils play well though mainly in separate boys and girls groups. They are provided with some play resources, although these were not being frequently used during the inspection. The high quality of relationships continued and there was no evidence of any aggressive or anti-social behaviour. There are no exclusions at present. Behaviour and discipline is adequately supervised. At lunch good table manners were observed and food eaten in a responsible manner.
11. Parents were surveyed during the inspection. Evidence was obtained from the questionnaires, the parents' evening and discussions during the inspection week. There is full support for the values and standards the school promotes.
12. Pupils' respect for each other, their school staff and their school is excellent. These values clearly reflect the school ethos and mission statement. This respect is further fostered by the very good and calm demeanour shown by all the staff. Staff have high expectations from pupils and this is reflected by an absence of litter, graffiti or damage to the school. Clothes fallen to the floor are picked up and replaced on the hooks.
13. Levels of attendance are sound. Figures of attendance for the last three years have decreased and for the last year, 1998/9, attendance was 94 per cent. This is slightly below the national average. However, figures for last term show attendance has risen to over 95 per cent and the deputy headteacher is seeking ways to maintain this improvement. Levels of unauthorised attendance are minimal and the levels of authorised absence are increased by more parents taking extended holidays in term time. Punctuality is good and registration is taken swiftly with the minimum of delay. This is a good start to the day and has a positive influence on pupils' attentive attitudes.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. The quality of teaching has been maintained at the high level reported at the last inspection. It is good throughout the school, with frequent examples of very good practice at both key stages. It was good in 59 per cent of the lessons observed with a further 21 per cent being very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching of English and mathematics is good and is positively promoting the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, particularly when withdrawn for additional support and when receiving specific support in class lessons. This enables them to participate fully in class activities and to make good progress. The teaching for the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language is good and promotes good progress in the development and use of their language skills. Strengths in teaching were identified in all year groups and this consistently high quality of teaching is a significant factor in achieving standards which are above the national average.

15. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work well together to use a good range of teaching methods to encourage pupils' interest and involvement. Teachers know their pupils well and manage their classes very effectively to ensure that pupils sustain concentration and try to achieve the objective for the lesson. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, a lively introductory activity was used very effectively to focus pupils' attention on improving the sentence structure in their writing. The teacher used questions very well to ensure that all pupils participated in and contributed to the class discussion. A brisk pace was maintained by the effective use of time targets to ensure pupils remain focused on what they are required to do. Pupils were aware that their ideas have converted two simple sentences into a lively start to a story, with very good use of vivid images. Pupils' learning was then extended very well by this knowledge being used to develop interesting descriptions in their own story writing.
16. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. They effectively develop pupils' independence by requiring them to think up their own ideas to solve particular problems and devise ways in which they can present their results clearly. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to try to find a link between three-dimensional shapes, such as prism and pyramids, and their properties. The teacher used questions very well to check on how pupils have developed and tested their ideas. The teacher used good subject knowledge to check on how pupils can devise a formula which reflects their findings and present their data to show that their formula works. An effective use of the plenary session at the end of the lesson allowed the teacher to encourage pupils to explain their ideas to others in the class. This extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical investigations and encourages independence in, and responsibility for, their work.
17. In the 20 per cent of lessons where teaching is not of a high quality, but is still sound overall, teachers do not consistently have high expectations to extend pupils' skills and knowledge. In a Year 7 religious education lesson the teacher did not use the plenary session to check on and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example the use of the Koran and other holy books. Teachers do not use short-term plans to show how activities build on prior learning and opportunities are not consistently taken to extend pupils' skills and knowledge.
18. Many teachers mark pupils' work constructively and give clear guidance over ways in which the quality could be improved. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way teachers mark and assess pupils' work and use the information to ensure learning activities are matched well to pupils' needs. Some teachers clearly identify lesson objectives, indicate them to the pupils, then assess standards against these objectives. They then use appropriate procedures to record attainment and inform future lesson plans. Teachers are beginning to use individual pupil target-setting effectively as a way of improving standards, although specific guidance is not consistently given to enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment.
19. Teachers use homework well to consolidate and extend work covered in class. They closely follow the school policy, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and this contributes well to pupils' attainment. Many teachers provide additional opportunities for pupils to use homework to extend their skills and knowledge. For example, the teacher in a Year 5 numeracy lesson challenged pupils to extend their knowledge of factors, initially developed in class, by trying more difficult problems for homework.
20. Teachers effectively reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. A very good focus is made on specific vocabulary, for example in science and geography, and

opportunities are taken in French to extend pupils' knowledge of grammar and language structure. Teachers promote numeracy skills well in science, in aspects of geography and in analysing different rhythmic patterns in music. There was limited evidence of teachers frequently using information technology to support pupils' work across the curriculum. Some opportunities were offered to reinforce number and literacy skills and to gain information from CD-Roms and the Internet. However, teachers do not consistently identify opportunities in their planning to use information technology and this restricts the development of pupils' skills.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

21. The school provides a broad range of good quality learning opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. It fully meets statutory requirements in all subjects of the National Curriculum. It generally meets the locally agreed syllabus requirements for religious education at both key stages, although pupils' knowledge and understanding of world faiths, other than Christianity, are not fully promoted. The curriculum is further broadened by the provision of French lessons at Year 6. The length of the school day and the time planned for teaching at Key Stage 2 are in line with guidelines. The time allocated for teaching is slightly less than the recommended minimum for Key Stage 3. Insufficient time is allocated to information technology, mainly due to a lack of computers, which effects the pace of pupils' learning. High priority is given to developing pupils' development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy across other subjects. This effectively impacts on pupils' standards.
22. The school enriches pupils' learning well by providing a very good range of extra-curricular activities at different times outside the school day, for example through various sports clubs, music and drama. Most teachers, some parents and a large number of pupils are involved. Opportunities to promote pupils' musical interests are outstanding and a strength of the school. Pupils can learn to play recorders, the violin, cello, wind, brass and keyboard instruments from visiting specialists. A large number of pupils play in the school orchestra to a very high standard. Very good opportunities are offered to go on residential visits.
23. The school's curriculum provides good equality of opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs policy is in line with the Code of Practice<sup>1</sup> and the special educational needs register is regularly reviewed and updated. Individual education plans are drawn up with clearly defined, achievable targets, now shared with pupils, staff and parents. These plans have improved since the last inspection through the use of a computer programme and become more effective and manageable for staff to use as tools to improve pupils' learning.
24. The provision for personal and social education, including health, drug and sex education, is very good. It is carefully planned as part of the curriculum and has clearly influenced pupils' attitudes and behaviour. For example, Year 7 pupils act out different ways of solving dilemmas to be faced in modern life. Representatives from local services such as the community nurse, police, dentist and Samaritans enhance learning by sharing their skills and knowledge with pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have a clearly identified adult to support them if required.

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

25. Links with the community are good and positively contribute to pupils' learning. For example, a strength is the Year 7 business venture. Pupils design, develop and make products which are then sold at their own Craft Fayre. They obtain a loan from the local bank manager and decide how to spend their profits, currently planned to support two Tibetan children in India. This effectively broadens their experience of the wider world. Opportunities to link with others around the world available through access to the Internet are at an early stage of development. The school has strong, improved, links with the local church, local sports clubs and local organisations, such as donating harvest festival gifts to the Salvation Army. They join in performances at the Norwich Theatre and Arts Festival, sing carols at an old people's home and visit local museums and art galleries. This has a significant impact on their social and cultural development.
26. The school has constructive relationships with partner institutions, such as with other local schools for curriculum support. It has improved its relationships with link schools since the last inspection and ensures that pupils progress smoothly from the first to middle and on to the high school, through close working links with teachers, arranging visits and transferring records appropriately. It is working hard to improve communications further by developing knowledge of pupils' standards in Year 3 and revising the Year 7 curriculum, for example in religious education, to enable pupils to have continuity of learning when they move into Year 8. A strength is the link with the high school's information technology network. This enhances the curriculum offered in information and communication technology, although it is not yet being used consistently to promote higher standards of attainment.
27. The provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies provide pupils with the opportunity to sing and pray, with moments of reflection on the human spirit, Christian beliefs and values. Pupils spend some time in considering the importance of respect for the values of others through religious education teaching, although time spent on considering the values and beliefs of other faiths is limited. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to consider the lives of others, through music, art and literature appreciation. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with others. Year 5 pupils express their feelings very well in the writing of poems about war, love and hatred. In history, they explore the realities for a child living in Victorian times. In art, they portray feelings they experience in listening to music.
28. The provision for pupils' moral education is very good. Pupils are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong. The school places a strong emphasis on helping pupils to understand the principles that underpin moral values. They respond to such messages well, talking freely about the very good behaviour in the school. Lessons in personal and social education result in work of very good quality by Year 7 pupils, who consider each other's talents, displaying the qualities they see in friends. Well-presented photographs of activities and achievements illustrate the extent to which pupils' talents are valued in the school. They are encouraged in the values of honesty and courtesy and through charitable collections gain good opportunities to consider others less favoured than themselves. They are taught effectively to take pride in their work. The staff in return place high value on pupils' achievements by giving them the chance to report back in class and show good work in assemblies. Pupils take responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviour. Improving quality of work shows the extent to which they increase their independence in learning as they mature. They help each other during computer times and older pupils are helpful to those who are younger at lunch-times and during breaks.
29. Provision for social development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have opportunities for widening their horizons through a wide range of visits to places such as the Peak District, Dover and France. A business venture by Year 7 gave

them a very good understanding of commerce and trade as well as showing them the wisdom of successful team operations. Special projects, such as the direct charitable links with a school in Tibet, give them a wider view of the world, along with other regular opportunities for working in the local community. Pupils have regular opportunities for working together in class. For example, Year 5 develop good skills in team work through research opportunities in history. Pupils participate regularly in school routines, such as returning registers. Older pupils work in pairs to ensure assemblies run smoothly.

30. Cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school provides a rich range of cultural experiences through art and music and literature, particularly poetry. European visits extend their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. In history, they learn about their own and appreciate other cultures. Work on display shows pupils have understood the essence of Egyptian art and culture. In geography, they examine the lives of people in India. Stories from different cultures are read at the end of the day. In religious education lessons they have some opportunities to learn about other religions. These are not developed fully and this is reflected in the range and standard of pupils' work.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

31. Staff know the pupils very well. Class teachers are generally very sensitive to the personal needs of individuals and monitor their personal development well. Adults take care to communicate any concerns to the headteacher, who has developed good techniques for reassuring pupils with particular worries, helping them to adjust to the life of the school. The staff have good routines for agreeing the best adult to reassure individual pupils and deal sensitively with problems identified. This caring approach is recognised and appreciated by parents.
32. Two members of staff have received full training with regard to child protection issues, using the agreed procedures with all local agencies. This knowledge and expertise has been shared with all members of staff and all concerns are investigated thoroughly. First aid procedures are well established and the school office is the centre for first aid, using the medical area close by. Appropriate entries are made in the accident books and there is an effective follow up system to contact parents. The systems for administering prescribed medicines are good.
33. Health and safety issues raised in the last inspection have been effectively dealt with. The whole building and outside grounds are free of litter, graffiti or damage. The décor is clean and tidy and in relevant areas hygienic. There have been noticeable improvements in the last three years according to staff and parents. Records of annual maintenance checks are in place. Risk assessment is conducted formally on an annual basis but informally at least weekly. School security is constantly under review. All members of the teaching staff have received training for their personal safety. This is another safety aspect to provide the children with a secure environment. Health and safety is observed throughout the school; for example, in a physical education lesson the class teacher asked children to remove their watches before participating.
34. Procedures to monitor attendance are sound. Every Friday each register is scrutinised and any concerns are analysed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher also monitor the registers and attendance statistics. The Educational Welfare Officer visits every term or more frequently if requested. The school intends to change to the computerised methods of recording attendance later this year, which will enable more effective monitoring. Although attendance figures are broadly in line with national averages, the increasing use of extended holidays in term is being discouraged.



35. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and eliminating all forms of aggression are very good. This is another strength of the school and has a very positive impact on the overall quality of education. The children can flourish without fear of harassment. Good teaching together with good classroom management create a positive learning environment. Staff provide good role models and set examples of good manners. High expectations that pupils will adopt these values is evident both in class, in play or movement around the school. They are polite and courteous to visitors.
36. Playground behaviour management is good and staff understand the behaviour policy and implement it consistently well. Teaching staff fully support the midday supervisors in maintaining discipline. Pupils are aware of the rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour and feel that it is fairly applied. Sanctions, including a Friday detention, are used carefully, where needed. Staff and pupils are confident that any potential problems are quickly sorted out. However, should a behaviour pattern develop, then the professional input of the outside agencies is sought, together with parental involvement. A programme to prevent further misbehaviour is worked out.
37. Procedures to monitor the academic progress of pupils are generally effective and the school takes appropriate action to ensure pupils receive any additional support. The school is able to record and analyse progress pupils make in National Curriculum tests between Key Stages 1 and 2. They also use standardised tests for reading, spelling and mathematics throughout the school. In cases where monitoring identifies gaps in skills for a number of children, adaptations to teaching are put in place. For example, the school is currently working with all pupils to improve spelling, as a result of information gained from standardised tests.
38. The school has been slow to improve assessment since the last inspection. However, work carried out recently is of good quality and closely linked to helping pupils to improve their work by setting individual targets. Years 6 and 7 write targets for improving their work in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Year 5 write targets for English and mathematics and Year 4 are beginning to examine their own performance in English. In Year 7, pupils are gaining particular benefit from additional targets for personal and social development, with significant support from teachers to understand the links between such gains and academic performance. The strength of the approach is evident in targets for writing. The co-ordinator has simplified the standards for writing and very good copies are in all classrooms, with annotated work illustrating different levels of attainment.
39. A weakness is in formal record keeping by class teachers which varies in quality and therefore in its usefulness as a tool for discussing shorter term progress with other staff. A further weakness is that lesson plans do not show clearly how assessment is to be used, making it difficult to adjust plans accordingly. In particular, arrangements for pupils with special educational needs do not appear consistently in lesson plans. Teachers have copies of individual education plans and these are used effectively in literacy and numeracy. This enables them to involve these pupils appropriately in target setting in these areas.

#### HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Overall the links with parents and carers are good and the issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Many parents have remarked on the overall improved quality of information in the last two or three years.
41. The induction process for children from the local first schools is good. A number of parents stated that this process has improved in recent years and the school is now a

warm and welcoming environment. Parents are kept fully informed about how their child will be received into the school. Many parents feel that it makes a positive start to their links with the school.

42. Routine information is good and the annual progress report fully meets the statutory requirements. This report allows for each child to make his or her own comments and personal targets for improvement. Parents are sent a response letter for their comments or suggestions. For those children with special education needs, parents are informed fully and invited to attend reviews. In appropriate cases, regular liaison occurs with social services, should any child be subject to a care order.
43. At the beginning of each autumn term every parent receives information on the topics or subjects to be taught for the forthcoming year. In addition parents are encouraged to monitor their child's work either through an 'open door' policy, or taking the work home or through homework and reading diaries. There are parent evenings in the autumn and spring terms so that parents can discuss issues with the class teacher. Most parents understand the objectives of the Literacy Hour or Numeracy Project and how they can support at home. This has a positive impact on their children's learning. Information on the literacy and numeracy initiatives is to be extended this academic year and will further support raising levels of attainment.
44. The newly established Home School Agreement is a priority in the school development plan and is part of the improving links with parents. Parents and pupils were consulted about the different parts of the agreement and many of their ideas were included in the document which is currently in use. The impact is being evaluated and parents' views will again be taken into account.
45. The role and support of the Parent Teacher Association are strengths of the school. Newsletters and a wide variety of functions help raise large sums of money, which support the learning by providing resources. The Parent Teacher Association also provides a useful channel of information between the school and parents. For example, they hold a barbeque for potential parents, as well as staff and existing parents. This promotes the school well and allows for informal opportunities to discuss issues. Already the Parent Teacher Association has set a goal for raising money to provide an up to date information technology suite so that the children can meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
46. The response from the parent questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive with a high percentage returned. The 28 parents who attended the parents' evening clearly expressed their support for the school and the good quality of education it provides. Parents interviewed during the inspection process were, on the whole, positive and supportive.
47. During the inspection only a few parents were observed helping in class. However, parents were observed helping in cookery, reading or extra-curricular activities. This help enhances the quality and range of educational activities provided by the school. Some of the classroom assistants are former parent helpers. With encouragement and professional in-service training, they have achieved recognised national qualifications. They feel very much part of 'the team' and their opinions are listened to and welcomed.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. The leadership and management of the school are very good. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the aspects of management planning, roles and responsibilities of staff and extending the role of the

governing body. A positive, very clear educational direction is given to the work of the school by the headteacher, supported very effectively by a strong team of staff and governors. The headteacher has been especially successful in developing a sense of partnership and community in which staff, governors, parents and pupils are all encouraged to contribute to a continuing commitment to improve standards. There is a very positive school ethos, based strongly on Christian values and beliefs, which promotes excellent relationships and respect for others. This caring, supportive approach is a significant influence on ensuring that pupils enjoy being at school and seek to achieve high standards. Parents are particularly supportive of the high quality of leadership and management and of the high expectations of both work and behaviour.

49. The purpose of the school, set out clearly in its mission statement and agreed aims, is to provide, within a Christian framework, a caring, safe and stimulating environment which enables all pupils to develop their knowledge and skills to full potential through all areas of experience. This is clearly reflected in the work of the school and supported well by parents who value how much their children like school and the good progress they make.
50. The headteacher has a very good overview of the school. He has made good progress in developing a management structure in which subject co-ordinators are given both time and opportunities to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and standards of teaching and learning within their subjects. The headteacher observes teachers regularly and has used specialist advisers to give guidance on specific teaching issues, for example the use of displays of work to challenge pupils' thinking. All subject co-ordinators have observed teaching in all year groups and have looked carefully at standards being achieved. They have given feedback to both the headteacher and year staff, identifying strengths and areas for development. Co-ordinators provide suitable guidance to other staff on teaching their subjects and complete a detailed, annual audit which indicates strengths and points for development. These contribute to a very effective management plan which has improved considerably since the last inspection. This plan, supported by careful financial planning and management, provides a clear focus for further school improvement. It clearly indicates start and finish dates for each priority issue, identifies the key personnel involved in its development and links closely to anticipated costs. The plan is reviewed regularly by governors and the management team, although some aspects of the monitoring and evaluation are not clearly identified to ensure that progress is being made on all issues.
51. The governors make a substantial and significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school. They have a broad range of expertise and use it well, through an effective committee structure, to focus on areas for improvement within the school. The governors are actively involved in the school and keep informed well through regular visits to the school and meetings with the headteacher and other members of the management team. The governors keep parents well informed about what they are trying to achieve. They know the school well and work closely, particularly with the headteacher, on monitoring standards and supporting staff in trying to raise standards. They have agreed annual performance targets with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, closely linked to development priorities within the school.
52. The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, is developing an increasing range of assessment data, for example in reading, spelling and mathematics. This is being used with increasing effectiveness to target areas for improvement. Although Key Stage 2 test results in 1998 were lower than in previous years, the use of targeted pupil support, together with an effective introduction to the literacy strategy, improved results in 1999. The school has identified realistic targets for pupils' achievements in the Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics in 2000 and 2001. Assessment data has been used well to identify weaknesses in a particular year group so that targets can be

adjusted and additional strategies used to try to improve attainment levels. Individual pupils' termly targets have been introduced this school year, supported well by parents and the pupils themselves, and they are proving effective in indicating ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their work.

53. The governing body, mainly through its finance committee working closely with the headteacher and the school's finance assistant, have established good procedures for financial planning and management. There has been significant improvement on the concerns reported in the last inspection. The governing body has drawn up and adopted clear financial terms of reference which are formally reviewed annually. The level of financial recording has been developed further to assist with budget monitoring and future forecasting. The school efficiently uses finances to improve pupils' literacy skills, particularly spelling. Specific financial grants have also been used to implement the National Numeracy Strategy well, especially to focus on pupils' mental mathematical skills. The school has allocated additional time to the school's financial officer to closely monitor the school's expenditure levels against other similar schools. Detailed information from the local authority's financial services is very valuable in enabling the school to identify cost savings. The finance committee is successfully using the principles of 'best value' to ensure that finances are efficiently used, for example in the building improvements made to the Years 5 and 7 areas.
54. There are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified, experienced teachers and support staff to match the demands of the curriculum and to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are taught effectively. Although class sizes are large, the school compensates by providing additional part-time teaching support. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and now all have job descriptions. They work as a very effective, dedicated team. Non-teaching staff such as the administrative staff, midday supervisory assistants, the caretaker and cleaners ensure the day-to-day life of the school functions smoothly. Induction arrangements for supporting new staff follow recommendations. The school offers good provision for the training of new teachers through its commitment to the professional development of teachers, good quality teaching and high standards.
55. The school's buildings and grounds provide satisfactory, easily accessible accommodation which meets the needs for teaching all aspects of the curriculum. The school has correctly identified priorities for improving its facilities. For example replacement of the old design and technology building, and the size and quality of the playground. The good range of specialist accommodation, such as music and science rooms, a swimming pool, food technology room and a well organised library with study areas, enables teaching to be more effective. Since the last inspection substantial improvements have been made in the maintenance and internal decoration of the building and the use of the Years 5 and 7 learning areas. These, together with good quality, attractive displays throughout the school, have made a positive impact. The school provides a stimulating, well cleaned and maintained place for pupils to learn and play.
56. Learning resources are satisfactory overall in quality and quantity for the curriculum and range of pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, there is variation in the adequacy of resources. The school has correctly identified an urgent need to improve computer resources as the lack of sufficient modern computers impacts on pupils' learning. Although the school is now on the Internet, pupils do not have enough time on a computer to develop their skills fully. In contrast, the very good range and quantity of musical instruments, including electronic keyboards and stringed instruments, promotes music learning well. The improved library effectively promotes higher levels of literacy for all pupils by its contribution in encouraging pupils to read widely and confidently for pleasure and information. The school enriches the curriculum

well by offering very good opportunities for pupils to go on educational and residential visits, for example to the Peak District, France and Holland, enabling pupils to develop their knowledge of the world beyond school.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. In order to build on the existing good practices and improve the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) raise standards in information technology by:
    - improving the range of resources;
    - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge and use them to support work in other subjects;
  - (2) ensure that the information from teachers' assessments is used consistently to inform pupils what they need to improve to achieve higher levels of attainment;
  - (3) extend the recent good developments in assessment, particularly the use of target-setting, to ensure it is used more consistently to improve the quality of pupils' work;
  - (4) ensure that teachers' lesson plans clearly identify learning objectives and link them closely to assessment opportunities.

In addition to the issues listed above, the less important issue of reviewing the teaching time allocated to Key Stage 3 should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	59	20	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

Y4– Y7

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	271
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	23

#### Special educational needs

Y4 – Y7

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.008
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	35	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	26 (15)	24 (14)	30 (22)
	Girls	29 (19)	26 (14)	31 (17)
	Total	55 (34)	50 (28)	61 (39)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	81 (60)	74 (49)	90 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	24 (18)	24 (19)	30 (17)
	Girls	29 (20)	27 (18)	31 (18)
	Total	53 (38)	51 (37)	61 (35)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	78 (67)	75 (65)	90 (61)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

## Exclusions in the last school year

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	261
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	33.1

#### Education support staff: Y4– Y7

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

### Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	484,494
Total expenditure	462,329
Expenditure per pupil	1,779
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,406
Balance carried forward to next year	52,571



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 50%

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	121

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	45	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	58	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	61	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	66	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	40	54	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	57	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	47	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	58	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	52	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	53	3	0	4

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

**ENGLISH**

58. Pupils achieve good standards in English, above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave the school in Year 7. Inspection findings reflect these high standards achieved in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Apart from a slight dip in 1998 due to the numbers of pupils with special educational needs, results have been above average over the last four years and improved in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, English test results were also above average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school is in a good position to achieve the local authority targets set for 2000. They are slightly lower than 1999 results because of the numbers of pupils with special educational needs.
59. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Pupils are articulate and talk confidently, using an increasingly complex vocabulary on a wide range of subjects. The way pupils of all ages express their views about their work and about school life in general, shows the sophistication of their use of language. Teachers expect very high standards from pupils and plan plentiful opportunities for discussion across the curriculum and for pupils to act out situations. This significantly impacts on their speaking and listening skills. For example, Year 7 pupils dramatised their own choice of a real life situation, such as double booking in a restaurant, to show appropriate and unsuitable ways of complaining, and analysed the effect of using aggressive or polite language. The very good relationships between pupils and their teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given equal opportunities. These encourage pupils to be confident to express their ideas, to answer and ask questions that are responsive to others' views. Teachers provide good role models in their use of technical language across the curriculum, such as in science, enabling pupils to master new vocabulary well.
60. Pupils enter school with above average standards in reading and maintain these good standards throughout the school. Parents and carers make a valuable contribution to children's learning by hearing them read regularly at home. Pupils enjoy reading and set themselves clear home reading targets, for example to read at least three times a week. They read fluently, accurately and with expression, showing good understanding of a wide range of texts, such as modern and classic fiction, poetry and plays. They justify their choice of authors and books clearly. The vast majority of pupils have a good knowledge of library skills through receiving systematic teaching. They confidently use the contents, glossary and index in non-fiction books to locate information and understand how to find books using the Dewey classification system in the library. They use dictionaries and thesauruses well to improve the quality of their writing.
61. In Year 7 pupils are independent, responsive and enthusiastic readers. They show more discrimination in their choice of reading texts and are developing understanding that texts are adapted and changed when used for different media, such as in the book and television film versions of Jane Eyre. Teachers choose interesting texts in whole class shared reading sessions, which extends pupils' reading experience well. They also encourage them effectively to read for pleasure. For example, Year 7 have studied Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet with enjoyment. The school encourages pupils to read fiction books at home. It provides some opportunities for pupils to read books which are not included in the school reading scheme, including some non-fiction. However, a wider range of texts, including non-fiction, might increase pupils' pleasure and knowledge and provide more challenge for higher attaining readers.

62. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Pupils write in a wide range of styles, such as letters, poems, fables, stories, newspaper accounts and plays, for different purposes and readers. Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well across the curriculum. The empathetic writing in history is of a high standard; for example, pupils in Year 6 wrote a letter from a pauper, working as an apprentice in a factory, vividly describing the dreadful working conditions. Throughout the school pupils' writing is imaginative. Teachers use discussions well to guide pupils choice of words for variety and interest. Good examples of thoughtful writing are the abstract noun poems written by Year 5, "Old age is grey....". The use of a range of punctuation in writing is slightly less developed than expected across the school, particularly for pupils of average attainment. For example, many pupils in Year 4 do not automatically write in sentences with capital letters. Pupils develop a good understanding of the processes of planning, drafting, revising and editing and by Year 6 are starting to make good use of planning notes. The recent whole school emphasis on developing pupils' spelling skills is appropriate and indications are that standards are improving. Good teaching of spelling, with words being set for homework and the use of methods, such as look, cover, say, write, check, is effective in improving learning, although such methods are not fully reinforced across the curriculum. Teachers have taught pupils to use spell checkers effectively; for example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were checking their spelling of adjectives to improve their descriptive writing.
63. Standards achieved in writing in Year 7 are average, reflecting the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in English. Pupils write confidently for a variety of purposes, using lively language. Throughout the school, pupils use computers as a writing tool and make good use of them to improve presentation; for example, some Year 7 pupils typed a newspaper page with the leading article reporting the terrible murder of Thomas à Becket. The strategy of having a learning partner is enjoyed by pupils and makes a positive contribution to their ability to analyse critically their own and others' writing and to discuss writing ideas.
64. All pupils take care and pride in the neat presentation of their written work. Nearly all pupils' handwriting style is joined, fluent and legible. Pupils try hard to pass their pen test.
65. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their special targets, many of which are appropriately based on skills of reading, writing and spelling. Teachers and support staff know their pupils' needs well and set work at an appropriate level for their learning. They have improved their writing of individual education plans which contain clear targets, shared effectively with pupils and parents, promoting progress well. These pupils, and a pupil with English as an additional language, receive good quality, structured support, either in small groups with experienced staff or in ability groups or sets in English lessons.
66. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. Good standards of literacy contribute significantly to pupils' learning across the curriculum.
67. The quality of teaching is good overall, with nearly a quarter of lessons observed being very good. Throughout the school, teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly by choosing appropriate texts and using effective methods, such as a writing frame to guide story writing. The most effective teaching is associated with high expectations, where teachers make good use of a range of challenging and interesting activities to keep all pupils well motivated. In Year 7, a teacher shared clear learning objectives with pupils, with appropriate challenge to fully extend the higher attaining pupils and fully involved pupils in evaluating the effectiveness of their spoken dialogue. They were reminded clearly of the criteria they had to achieve in order to improve their skills. Teachers have good knowledge of the key English skills pupils are capable of achieving, and are

effectively helping them to reach the next level of the National Curriculum, for example by setting their own termly targets. These vary in quality and are most effective when pupils chose success criteria linked to attainment levels, rather than rewards such as house points. Teachers use questioning well to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding, and take care to involve all pupils. Very occasionally the level of spelling set does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils and opportunities are missed to fully involve pupils in the whole class shared reading part of the Literacy Hour. The quality of marking is usually thorough and at its best guides pupils in how to improve the quality of their work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

68. Attainment is above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests show that standards were close to the average compared nationally and compared with similar schools. Test results over the last four years show that although standards were lower in 1998 compared to previous years, a significant improvement was made in 1999. The school has set realistic Key Stage 2 attainment targets for 2000 and 2001 based on the increasing range of assessment information collected on the different year groups in the school. It is progressing well to achieve and probably exceed these targets.
69. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are continuing to improve. The number of pupils achieving Level 4 and above is above the national average. The number achieving Level 5 is just above the national average. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The consistently high quality of teaching is improving pupils' numeracy skills, particularly the speed of mental recall and use of mental skills in solving a broad range of number problems. Pupils respond enthusiastically to a good range of mental activities which effectively extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were encouraged to use the "Factor factory" display to focus their attention on developing their understanding of factors and prime numbers. Pupils make good progress in all the required aspects, with some particularly good standards being achieved in number and shape work. Year 6 pupils' knowledge of place value was used well to quickly work out addition and subtraction problems using larger numbers up to 10,000. They use frequent number-based activities well to reinforce and extend pupils' numeracy skills. For example, the use of partitioning is taught well to enable Year 6 pupils to increase their range of strategies for tackling more demanding multiplication problems. There are some opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to solve mathematical investigations. However, the priority given to effectively developing the school's numeracy strategy and improving pupils' number skills does not enable pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding consistently by being regularly challenged to apply their skills in investigational activities.
70. Standards of attainment when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7 are also above nationally expected levels. Consistently good quality teaching and more challenging problem-solving activities promote good progress and above average standards of attainment. Numeracy skills are built on well, for example to extend pupils' knowledge and use of decimals. The school generally makes effective arrangements for organising pupils into ability groups at both key stages, although the range of attainment is still quite broad within these groups. Teachers plan a good range of activities and use effective methods to promote pupils' learning. For example, Year 7 lower attaining pupils consolidate their knowledge of multiplication tables by linking them to the rhythm of a song to improve their speed of recall. Teachers use investigational activities more frequently in Key Stage 3. Pupils generally respond very positively to the challenge of trying to use their knowledge to solve problems and investigations. For example, very

high standards were achieved by some higher attaining Year 7 pupils who found a link between the properties of different three-dimensional prisms and pyramids.

71. However, activities at both key stages are not always matched well to the range of pupils' abilities in the class. This leads to variation in the level and amount of work achieved by some pupils in the group. For example, in a Year 7 investigation into two- and three-dimensional shapes, the higher attaining pupils in the group quickly identified a possible pattern and collected suitable data to confirm their findings. Other pupils in the group did not fully understand what was required and were unable to initiate or develop any ideas to follow. In a Year 4 lesson on money, the particular activity restricted pupils in the amounts of money to be used in their calculations, although many of the higher attaining pupils were confident in their use of larger amounts of money. Although this consolidated pupils' knowledge and understanding of money transactions, learning was not extended effectively as pupils were not required to apply their learning in more challenging ways. Some teachers use on-going assessment very well to check on pupils' understanding of the specific lesson objective. This information is then used well to plan a suitable range of activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Currently this practice is not consistently used throughout the school and this restricts the progress of some pupils.
72. The school has developed a range of effective strategies to promote and extend pupils' learning in mathematics. It makes very effective use of identifying individual pupil targets to focus on improving numeracy skills. Teachers make good use of effective links with pupils' literacy skills by encouraging them to extend their knowledge of specific mathematical vocabulary and use it accurately in their work. For example, lower attaining Year 7 pupils accurately use such words as "inverse" and "integer" when explaining their number work. Some teachers use a "Maths Puzzle Corner" to challenge pupils to extend their skills and others set problems to individual pupils to develop their learning. For example, a Year 7 teacher asks pupils to use the Internet to find out more about "Euler's Rule" as part of shapes investigation. Homework is used well to consolidate and develop skills. Some teachers use information technology to further promote number skills, for example multiplication tables, although this is not used frequently throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. They have specific numeracy targets in their individual education plans and teachers work closely with support staff to ensure that these needs are met.
73. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is of a consistently high quality, particularly at Key Stage 3 where two out of every three lessons observed were very good. This is a significant factor in promoting high standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to provide a good range of interesting and challenging activities. This encourages pupils to maintain a positive and enthusiastic approach to their work. They are keen to succeed and to produce high quality work. For example, many teachers use number fans very successfully in the introductory activities to ensure pupils' attention is focused closely on their work from the very start of the lesson. Teachers then build on this well by sustaining a good pace throughout the lesson. Many use specific time targets and ensure that pupils know what they are expected to achieve in the time available for that activity. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on multiplication, the teacher focuses her attention very effectively for a specific period of time on extending the knowledge and understanding of one particular group. The teacher has a high expectation of what the other groups should achieve to which they readily respond. In the very good quality lessons, teachers use the plenary time very well at the end of the lesson to ensure that they assess the quality of the work being achieved in the other groups. They use this feedback effectively to link into planning for the next lesson. However, this good practice is not used consistently throughout the school. There is some variation in the quality of on-going assessment and teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' learning builds on prior knowledge and skills.

74. The role of the co-ordinator has been improved significantly since the last inspection. Regular classroom observations, focused mainly on evaluating the effectiveness of numeracy teaching together with monitoring the range and quality of work, are positively influencing teaching quality and standards achieved.

## SCIENCE

75. By the end of Key Stage 2 the 1999 national test results showed attainment in science was broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was above average, but the number achieving the higher Level 5 was broadly in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, results were average. Results over three years to 1999 show attainment has generally been sustained above national averages, apart from 1998 when a larger number of pupils with special educational needs resulted in below average results overall. Good standards have been sustained since the last inspection. The 1999 comparisons indicate boys and girls attained similar levels, which were broadly in line with the national average.
76. Inspection evidence shows that standards have improved on the 1999 test results. Attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 7 are making good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Standards exceed national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. Good quality teaching, pupils' consistently enthusiastic and positive approach and the effective use of literacy and numeracy contribute to improving standards.
77. In lessons, Year 6 pupils reach good standards in knowledge and understanding and in practical skills. They have very positive attitudes and can develop a good hypothesis, understanding the importance of a fair test. They interpret a line graph well, discussing variations in pulse rate during and after exercise. They reach sound standards in the use of number and have good writing skills. A factor that contributes to their success is the extent to which they are encouraged to speak extensively, using scientific vocabulary, to explain their thinking. For example, they discuss the likelihood of every one in the same class having the same pulse rate, deducing the variables that might influence results. In pairs, they reach good standards in the use of information technology by using a temperature sensor to record and display experimental results, discussing their analysis of information. Examination of earlier work shows the majority of pupils consistently perform well, although average and above average pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to aim for the higher levels, reflecting the 1999 Key Stage 2 test results.
78. Year 7 pupils make good progress in their knowledge but do not follow clear scientific processes in conducting experiments, limiting their growth in skills. In testing different foods for the presence of nutrients, they give clear accounts of their results but they do not have sufficient scientific information to explain the reasons why. They lack a firm understanding of the process of investigation, finding it difficult to use the terminology for planning and conducting an investigation, or considering and evaluating experimental evidence.
79. Pupils make good progress in knowledge and in skills during Key Stage 2. Year 4 develop a good understanding of sound vibrations through a series of practical observations, thinking and talking about how sounds are made. Several individuals speak clearly about what they have learned, resulting in good consolidation of the main learning points for the whole class. Year 5 are excited to discover which liquid is the thickest by timing the rate of fall of a ball-bearing through a range of liquids. They improve their practical skills as a result of well-planned lessons, understanding that the thickness of the liquid determines the rate of fall. Pupils with special educational needs

make good progress in both key stages because they are well supported by adults. They work fully with the rest of the class, achieving satisfactory levels in scientific skills and gaining confidence in knowledge and understanding. Support assistants are well briefed and work effectively with individual and groups, giving additional help of good quality.

80. Teaching is good in both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and the overall profile is a tribute to the staff. In Key Stage 2 this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this results in high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
81. Lessons are almost always stimulating and the quality of discussion is excellent when pupils are required to include clear scientific terms to explain their thinking. Teachers review lessons well by encouraging particular pupils to explain key learning points to the class. Similarly, they involve pupils with special educational needs fully in leading discussions. Such good use of assessment is successful in extending the learning of the class as a whole.
82. Planning is good overall, but daily planning does not show details of what different groups within the class will learn, with little use of the targets pupils have in their books. Teachers monitor the progress pupils make as they work, encouraging them to persevere and take pride in their work. On occasions, discussion between individuals or small groups of pupils with the teacher is of the highest quality, encouraging them to extend their thinking. The use of lesson evaluations is very limited, with little evidence of difficulties particular pupils may have had or how plans might change accordingly.
83. Teachers manage pupils very well, developing very good relationships. They foster very positive attitudes, developing a strong sense of responsibility, expecting pupils to take initiative. Teachers use other adults well to support pupils in their work. They use learning resources effectively, giving pupils good opportunities for first hand enquiry and research from information technology. Teachers set homework on a regular basis, fostering a continuing sense of purpose.
84. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave well in every lesson. They are attentive, listening to questions well and always willing to answer. They engage in lively discussion and are full of ideas. They are very enthusiastic, enjoying practical experiences to the full, excited by personal discovery. Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils become totally engrossed in their investigation, generally working very well in teams. The consistently high quality behaviour and positive attitudes are significant influences in promoting standards in science.

## **ART**

85. It was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, but judgements are made on the quality of work seen in pupils' folders and on display around the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills which is an improvement since the last inspection.
86. Pupils in Year 6 have produced a good range of paintings to demonstrate the features of Pointillism, developing good skills of texture, using dots. Year 4 pupils make good gains in their knowledge of how we communicate through art. Pupils respond very well to suggestions made by the teachers. In one class they focused on a detailed section of African statues, and in the other, studied a modern geometric painting for a fixed time, using their own imaginations to complete the drawing task. The tasks are challenging and motivate them to produce good work. Two pupils worked successfully using the computer for the same exercise, developing good skills in the use of "Dazzle". A very

good emphasis on promoting language skills gives pupils very good opportunities to speak clearly about the characteristic features of their artefacts.

87. Teachers praise pupils to encourage them and value their contributions to the lesson. This improves and sustains their concentration and affects the final outcomes of their work because they are willing to improve their skills. Work on display shows Year 5 have appreciated the work of other artists such as Paul Klee and Picasso, producing some work of a very good standard, such as a large reproduction of “The Weeping Woman”. Miniature portraits of Tudor characters improve pupils’ experience of the historic period as well as their skills in pencil drawings and in drawing in small scale. Similarly, they have produced good large scale paintings of Tudor characters, working collaboratively to very good effect.
88. Insufficient teaching was observed to judge its overall quality. However, in the two lessons seen, the strengths of the teaching had a very good effect on learning. Lesson objectives were clearly communicated, helping pupils to see the purpose of the task and motivating them to use their imaginations through the stimulus of very good artefacts. When teachers have high expectations of pupils for achieving good quality work, supporting them through developing skills such as shading, the work is of a particularly good standard. The two lessons seen were very well resourced, providing good cultural links that successfully extend pupils’ awareness in examining African sculptures and pre-historic cave paintings. Teachers make good use of art vocabulary and the names of a good range of artists, enriching their art appreciation. Examination of pupils’ work shows effective use of sketching folders, using paper of different qualities. A wide range of pupils’ work on display illustrates the extent to which their work is valued by adults and provides evidence of work in a good range of media, including three-dimensional. Pupils have produced a good range of clay artefacts, representing Christian symbolism, inspired by a visit to Norwich Cathedral. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The work done to improve the scheme has been effective. Planning has improved overall since the last inspection. An art club contributes to extending the time for pupils to produce three-dimensional work.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Key Stage 2 pupils maintain the high standards reported in the last inspection. Year 6 pupils measure accurately and reach good standards in the use of tools. They use their knowledge well, thinking ahead about the order of their tasks, choosing equipment purposefully, for example when producing a moving Victorian toy. Pupils sketch a range of ideas well before deciding on which one to make. However, initial designs are not always retained or evaluated to develop pupils’ understanding of the design process. Pupils are in line to reach well above expected standards by the time they leave school at the end of Year 7. In food technology, pupils receive good support from a parent helper to make bread rolls. They use a good range of different ingredients and effectively evaluate the quality of the finished product. In a product evaluation of watches, very good teaching enables pupils to have very good insights into form and function. They take the needs of the user into account in evaluating the quality of the design and manufacture. During earlier work, pupils made very good gains in their knowledge and understanding in both design and make elements through an enterprising business venture. Pupils use market research, take financial advice from the bank and work effectively in teams for large-scale production of products to be sold at a craft fayre.
90. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. Year 5 pupils generate very good ideas from a design brief to make a toy for a younger child, using a cam mechanism. They work productively with construction kits to produce a wide range of designs, identifying and resolving problems as they work in pairs. Pupils are highly



motivated by all aspects of the subject. The oldest are captivated by the challenge of designing watches for a number of people in different employment. They were particularly thrilled to make a profit for charity as a result of their business venture. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of effective support.

91. Teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in Years 5 and 7. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to develop practical skills. The emphasis on the design process is strong, although in a Year 6 lesson the teacher produced detailed step-by-step plans. This specific direction given by the teacher made it difficult for pupils to reach appropriate levels for this element of design. A strength is the extent to which pupils are required to think about the purpose for which products are made and to consider their customer in deciding on materials to use. Teachers help pupils to gain a clearer understanding of which design elements are important. Good discussion helps pupils to consider safety and to improve skills. Teachers have high expectations for the development of practical skills in the use of resistant and food materials. They effectively encourage pupils to gain increased independence in their work. When teachers organise effective collaborative work, pupils make good progress. They use resources very well, enabling pupils to benefit from a wide range of materials and from using equipment, to good effect. Parent helpers give very good support to pupils, enabling them to experience food technology during the year.
92. Teachers plan effectively to ensure pupils make good progress over time, incorporating the national scheme to good effect. A system of assessment is not in place. Teachers evaluate with pupils, but do not set clear personal targets for improving work, limiting the value of evaluation. Homework is used well to help the oldest pupils expand their ideas from initial inspirations gained in class.
93. Attitudes to learning are consistently good and positively promote high standards. Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology. However, this is not promoted by the accommodation. The design and technology room is not welcoming and does not encourage pupils to co-operate enthusiastically on their design and make projects.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Although only one lesson was observed during the inspection, evidence was gained from analysing a good range of work, both in pupils' books and on display, and from talking to pupils and staff. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress throughout both key stages, particularly in their mapping skills and knowledge.
95. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good knowledge of the main features on maps of the world and of the United Kingdom. They accurately name and locate the main physical features such as the continents, oceans and seas and the main cities. Pupils' mapping skills are initially developed through appropriate use of sketch maps and plans in Year 4. Very good progress is made through using these mapwork skills in practical activities linked to residential visits to the Norfolk Broads in Year 5 and to the Peak District in Year 6. Pupils' knowledge of mapping symbols, grid references and the use of different ways of showing height on maps are all developed very well through practical mapping activities.
96. These visits are also used very effectively to promote pupils' understanding of a good range of geographical themes. These include environmental and conservation issues such as the effects of water pollution on the wetlands of the Broads. Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of the main differences between living in Hethersett and living in a contrasting village location such as Castleton in the Peak District. This contrast is

developed further through comparing their lives with those of rich and poor people in the city of Bombay as part of their India topic. Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the possible impact of town planning developments are very well promoted through a close study of proposals which will affect town centre developments in their own locality. Pupils work well in groups to present high quality work with many different solutions, well reasoned arguments and clearly presented views. Such activities effectively promote pupils' literacy skills which are used well to present their views and opinions.

97. At Key Stage 3, Year 7 pupils know about micro-climates and how local weather conditions change. They show a detailed understanding of how rainfall affects the United Kingdom. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their geography work and talk enthusiastically about the work they achieved on the different school trips. They are keen to find out about other places in this country and in the world. Some pupils use information technology to find out more information on such topics as 'weather' and 'rainforests'. However, this is not consistently developed. The school is not yet effectively using the opportunities offered by Internet links and a good range of information technology software.
98. Although there was insufficient evidence to give an overall grade on the quality of teaching, an analysis of teaching plans and talking to staff and pupils show that pupils get a good range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Good literacy skills, a lively interest in the topics studied and taking pride in the way in which they present their work enable pupils to achieve high quality work throughout the school.

## HISTORY

99. The good standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained in many aspects of history. By Year 7 pupils know about important episodes and developments in Britain's past from the Romans to modern times. Progress is good for pupils with special educational needs as teachers ensure they are fully involved in lessons.
100. All pupils are developing a good sense of historical enquiry. Teachers ensure that they know how to find out and combine information from a range of sources, such as diaries, books, pictures, photos, videos and visits to local historic places. Pupils in Year 6 use their study of the effects of the industrial revolution in Victorian times to recognise that evidence can be interpreted in different ways and may be biased. They understand that factory owners such as "Mr Arkwright" have a different opinion from the home woollen weavers who lost their livelihoods. Pupils' sense of chronology is promoted well through using a time line illustrating special dates with events and pictures. They show an increasing awareness that the past can be divided into different periods, for example the Romans, Medieval times and Tudors. Pupils' learning is good and most enjoyable when work is associated with first hand experience, effectively bringing history alive. For example, during their study of Britain in the Second World War, pupils in Year 7 dressed in appropriate clothes and acted out an experience of life for an evacuee.
101. In Year 7 pupils have many opportunities for personal research continued for homework. Homework research projects make a significant impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers encourage pupils well to select and organise their information in lively and interesting ways, such as a book in the shape of a castle or an information booklet with flaps. Pupils show pride in their work and delight in explaining how they created specific effects such as "ageing parchment" with a teabag.
102. The quality of teaching is good. A strength of teaching is the care taken to bring history alive, for example by the use of different sources such as artefacts, videos and texts written at the time. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to dress up in period

costume and act out roles, such as in a Victorian school. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations and set appropriate, interesting tasks to motivate and meet the different attainment needs of pupils. Older pupils all talk with pleasure about their Year 5 Tudor topic. Teachers ensure pupils record their work in a wide variety of forms such as lists, letters and descriptions, illustrated with annotated diagrams. They use history very effectively to develop pupils' standards of writing, particularly in explaining setting and character in stories. Year 7 pupils' work on describing the murder of Thomas à Becket ranged from illustrated newspaper reports trying to use language of the time to an account written on parchment with an arrow through it. Pupils are encouraged well to use skills learned in other subjects, such as the use of computers as a source of information and to provide a professional finish to their presentation of text. Occasionally teachers' planning focuses on describing the activities to be covered rather than clearly identifying the learning objectives of the lesson. This makes it more difficult for teachers to assess pupils' historical skills and to guide them on how to improve and attain higher standards.

103. Pupils' good literacy skills make a significant contribution to their standards of discussion, ability to read historical information and their written work. They listen to each other carefully, confidently discuss why things happened and respect different points of view. Their personal development is well promoted in history also through opportunities for personal research.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

104. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The majority of Year 7 pupils are currently making sound gains in their knowledge and skills. They are broadly in line with national expectations by the time they leave the school at the end of the year. However, much is attributable to the background knowledge pupils have because they use computers at home, enabling them to produce work of a good standard for homework. This is displayed well and has a positive effect on helping the class as a whole to see what can be achieved. However, the current level of resources is insufficient for the majority of pupils to reach consistently good standards. Standards have not improved since the last inspection. However, plans are in place for the school to benefit from national funds to increase resources for information technology.
105. Pupils do not use computers frequently enough in school to reach good standards overall. However, pupils are gaining some good experience in using the most recent technology. A small group of pupils in Year 6 successfully learned how to use electronic mail, with effective teacher support. Year 7 work well independently in lessons. They are clear about the purpose of their learning task and perform basic word processing skills accurately. However, some pupils have limited keyboard skills, restricting the amount of work produced within a lesson. In using a basic mathematics programme, individuals frequently work at too low a level of addition in order to gain speed in using the software to make progress in their mental mathematics.
106. Pupils generally make sound progress in developing their skills and knowledge during lessons. Good provision for using the computer to improve literacy skills for pupils with special educational needs ensured two girls in Year 4 made good progress in writing a story onto the screen. As a result of good quality support from a learning assistant, they used the backspace, cursor and delete key, successfully correcting errors within the text. Pupils in Year 5 have produced attractive poems, using "clip art" well to begin the poem with a decorative letter. They have good opportunities to work in pairs in the library during history, to use the Internet for research. However, they do not have the skills to write instructions accurately and are unsuccessful in retrieving information in the given time. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are well motivated to improve

their skills. They are attentive to instructions and enjoy their work. They are willing to talk about their work, explaining things they find most difficult .

107. Insufficient teaching was seen to judge its overall quality. The strength of the development is the commitment of the staff to making the use of technology relevant throughout the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators have a good appreciation of how best to use computers. They establish appropriate expectations of how pupils use a range of software. For example, in science, pupils are taught how to interpret line graphs produced, using a temperature sensor. The weakness is the limited use of direct teaching, together with lack of adult supervision for most computer activities, such as the use of computers in class during literacy and numeracy and the use of the Internet in the library. The limited opportunities for teachers or helpers to monitor pupils' progress means it is difficult to ensure they continue to build successfully on earlier learning.
108. The scheme meets the full range of National Curriculum requirements. It identifies how the range of pupils' skills in such aspects as control and modelling are to be met. However, the planned curriculum is unsatisfactory because insufficient time is allocated. Lesson planning is unsatisfactory because lesson objectives do not take full account of development of competence in information technology. There are no records of the differing needs within classes, with tasks set for particular individuals or groups at an appropriate level of difficulty. It is therefore difficult for teachers or pupils to be clear about the standards they are reaching. Lessons are sometimes well organised for pupils to gain good first hand experience, as in Year 5 literacy, where pupils make good progress. Class records show pupils do not use the computer with sufficient frequency over time. Teachers' records do not identify the improvement in skills appropriate for their age and ability. An assessment system is currently being developed, providing teachers and pupils with a suitable procedure to assess skills. This does not currently show the levels of attainment reached by performing particular tasks. Older pupils are encouraged to record their use of computers at home and in school, but not to assess their own skills or to evaluate the effectiveness of the computer as a tool.
109. Learning resources are insufficient in number and teachers do not use existing resources to best effect. Computers are often turned off during the day, reducing the number of pupils who can gain regular access. Computers that have e-mail and Internet facilities are used more regularly.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - FRENCH**

110. Although a modern foreign language is not a National Curriculum requirement at Key Stage 2, French is taught to pupils in Year 6 as well as Year 7. Pupils in both year groups, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress, maintaining the standards reported in the last inspection. Year 7 pupils are achieving standards which are above those expected nationally at this early point in Key Stage 3.
111. Significant improvements have been made, particularly in developing an overall scheme of work and an improved range of resources. These enable pupils to develop their skills well, particularly in spoken French, and to build effectively on prior learning. They use them with increasing effectiveness in a broad variety of role-play activities. For example, many Year 6 pupils remember and confidently use a good range of appropriate greetings and information about themselves, such as 'where they live' and 'how old they are', when talking to a partner. Year 7 pupils extend their conversational skills further by including a broader range of vocabulary and phrases when talking about the sports and hobbies they like and dislike.
112. Pupils' pronunciation and accents are developing soundly. They remember and use a

increasing range of words and phrases. The teacher uses appropriate written activities to focus on accurate pronunciation of vocabulary rather than grammatical and spelling rules. This promotes standards in pupils' spoken French and encourages them to try to sound out new words and phrases and extend their conversational skills.

113. Pupils enjoy learning French and participate enthusiastically in partner and class activities. They join in well when singing French songs and these are used well to emphasise and improve pronunciation. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and questions. They show a good understanding of what they have heard and are keen to respond, for example when describing which sports they like. This positive attitude and pupils' willingness to try to pronounce and use new vocabulary promotes good progress.
114. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well prepared with a good range of interesting activities to maintain a good pace to lessons and to focus pupils' attention and encourage their involvement. For example, word games to identify missing letters enable Year 6 pupils to reinforce their knowledge and use of the sounds of letters of the alphabet. Songs are used well to consolidate and extend vocabulary. The teacher expects high standards of concentration and involvement to which pupils readily respond. For example, the initial response by Year 7 pupils to accompany the singing of French songs does not include all pupils in the group. When the teacher indicates that all pupils are expected to participate fully, the response is very good. Full participation ensures that all pupils practise their pronunciation skills and improve the quality of their response. On occasions, opportunities are not always taken to ensure that pupils consistently use their spoken skills. For example, the teacher does not expect Year 7 pupils to repeat the correct phrase when identifying a particular sporting activity.
115. The subject is co-ordinated well. A detailed scheme of work has been established which includes a broad range of topics. It enables pupils to gain a good understanding of the French way of life as well as the language. A residential trip to France provides additional opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and to use their language skills. Pupils are effectively involved in monitoring their own progress by completing termly self-assessments. These are used, together with teacher assessments, to identify areas in need of further development.

## **MUSIC**

116. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 achieve good standards in music in all aspects of performing and composing, listening and appraising. Standards have been maintained at a good level since the last inspection. Pupils respond well to the challenging musical demands made on them. The standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in the large school choir and orchestra, from pupils across the age range, are very good and well above those expected for their ages. Music is a clear strength of the school.
117. Throughout the school pupils perform accurately and confidently, and enjoy performing in front of an audience, for example in assemblies and concerts. Fifty pupils in Year 6 visited Holland last year to perform a joint concert in a church and the town hall. Pupils compose pieces and accompaniments successfully, selecting from a wide range of instruments, including wind instruments and keyboards, to create music reflecting a specific time. For example, pupils in Year 7 played a range of instruments in the style of Medieval music as an accompaniment for the Christmas journey story. Pupils listen carefully to each other's compositions and thoughtfully identify appropriate ways in which they can be improved. Pupils have good understanding of musical elements such as pitch and duration. In Year 5, pupils worked in groups of three to improvise rhythmic ideas in 3 or 4 time, with one maintaining the pulse and the others adding different

rhythms. They respond well to the mood of music and listen with attention to detail.

118. The quality of teaching in music is good with many very good features. The music specialist's very good music knowledge and high expectations means that pupils receive interesting, challenging activities and can play in an orchestra. Music terms such as pitch, beat, rhythm and dynamics are consistently used and reinforced. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, find music exciting and enjoyable. The quality of pupils' performances is accurately evaluated by the teacher and a strong emphasis is placed on pupils evaluating their own work, leading to improved standards and pupils striving to achieve highly. Assessment is built into planning and is used well to check knowledge, understanding and pupils' skills of appraising, through the use of questions such as "Which group's piece did you like best and why?" An unusually high number of teachers have good music skills which they use effectively to raise standards. For example, a good standard of piano accompaniment promotes good singing standards in assembly and choir. The very good range of extra music activities offered by staff also includes orchestra, guitar and several recorder groups such as a recorder ensemble playing in three parts including descant and bass recorders. Music topics are successfully linked to other subjects, including history and art. Year 6 pupils study impressionist art and create musical pictures to match the visual effect. The organisation of the combined classroom and music room is most effective when some of the tables are cleared. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are very good. They have a significant effect on promoting good standards as pupils have access to a wide range of instruments including electronic keyboards and computer effects.
119. The school offers an outstanding range of instrumental tuition given by peripatetic teachers, including woodwind, strings, percussion, brass and keyboard. The skills pupils learn promotes higher standards in lessons, such as when Year 7 pupils play the cello and "The Wedding March" on the piano as part of their group's composition for "West Side Story".

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Pupils at both key stages continue to make good progress, as reported in the last inspection, in developing their skills, particularly in games, swimming and dance. Pupils' enthusiastic attitude and enjoyment of physical activities, supported by sound and, on occasions, good quality teaching, promote effective skills development.
121. Teachers use good subject knowledge, particularly in swimming, to focus on improving the quality of pupils' performance. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on personal survival and water safety, the teacher increases pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to retain body heat when trying to survive in very cold water. Good knowledge of technique is used well by teachers to improve the quality of swimming strokes, for example the body position and use of arms in Year 4 pupils' front crawl. Pupils benefit from regular and frequent use of the school pool. Conditions have been improved, particularly the environmental concerns identified in the last inspection report. Pupils clearly enjoy swimming and sustain their concentration to focus on technique and to achieve their target. Good use is made by the school of a range of swimming achievement certificates to reward success and motivate pupils to try to attain higher levels.
122. Pupils' games skills, for example in soccer, are developed well through a carefully planned range of practices. These enable pupils to practise a particular skill, for example controlling the ball with different parts of the foot, before trying to use it in a competitive group or team activity. Teachers also challenge pupils to use these skills to devise their own activities and practices, for example when Year 7 are required to develop a practice to further extend their soccer skills. Such activities contribute to pupils' social

development through group planning and discussion and to their moral development through devising rules and clear guidelines to make the practices more efficient. On occasions, too much of lesson time was spent on planning and developing pupils' own activities and this limited the amount of active participation. Some pupils found sustained concentration difficult, particularly in cool outdoor conditions.

123. A very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities enhances the opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in competitive activities, for example in soccer and athletics, against other local schools. Many of these benefit from the support and enthusiasm of parents and coaches from local sports organisations. This has improved since the last inspection and makes a significant contribution to promoting an enthusiastic attitude and skill development.
124. The school has made significant improvements in the dance area of activity since the last inspection. Pupils show a good range of expressive movements when developing a dance sequence to music. Year 7 pupils worked effectively in a group to share ideas on developing a sequence based on the topic of 'nightmares'. They listened carefully to the stimulus of the accompanying music and developed some imaginative movements to successfully interpret the musical rhythm and beat. In another Year 7 lesson, pupils used increasing control in working on a robotic sequence, although the emphasis on slow, deliberate movements was not so clearly developed. Pupils evaluate their own dance sequences and those of other pairs and groups. They successfully identify ways in which the sequence and the quality of movement can be improved, for example by full extension of the arms in slow, controlled movements.
125. Teaching is never less than sound and frequently of good quality. Teachers manage their classes very well and actively encourage an enthusiastic approach. They generally maintain a good pace, with lively introductions and frequent changes of activity to retain pupils' interest and attention. Teachers use demonstrations well to promote and encourage pupils' ideas, for example when developing dance sequences. They ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved. They effectively include those pupils who are not actively participating for health reasons, for example by requiring them to carefully observe dance sequences and suggest ways in which these can be improved.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Standards in religious education are generally in line with those required by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 7. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity, although there are weaknesses in their knowledge of the beliefs and practices of other faiths. Improved links with the local church since the last inspection have effectively increased pupils' understanding of the meaning of Christianity throughout the school. For example, the vicar was invited to talk about baptism with Year 4 pupils, resulting in an interesting discussion. Pupils listened carefully and asked appropriate questions to further their knowledge, "If you have been christened as a baby can you decide not to be christened any more?". The school successfully achieves its mission statement to promote Christian values, such as caring for each other. A strength of pupils' achievement is shown by their interest and willingness to take an active part in discussions. They confidently suggest answers to questions about meaning with reference to their own experiences. In Year 6, pupils used their knowledge of how Christians in history, such as monks and Elizabeth Fry, cared for the sick and influenced progress in medicine and health care, following the example shown by Jesus.
127. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other world faiths is less well developed as these

are recent changes required by the 1998 revised locally agreed syllabus. This means that pupils at both key stages are not fully able to identify key features of particular religions as required. Although some Year 6 pupils demonstrate an increasing awareness of similarities and differences between the aspects of Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity, these are not always clearly understood. In Year 7 pupils are just starting to learn about Islam, rather than an in-depth study as required. All pupils respond thoughtfully to others' views on religion, empathise with and show respect for special books such as the Koran. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of religious education. Teachers ensure that they have appropriate work and fully involve them in discussions.

128. The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory overall with good features. The very good relationship between teachers and pupils, and the atmosphere of mutual respect, promotes learning and discussion well. Teachers involve all pupils in their questions and equally value their opinions, sharing ideas in a sensitive way. They relate religious education well to the experience and interest of pupils, encouraging them effectively to think more deeply about the meaning of life. For example, to illustrate that Advent is a time of waiting, pupils think about occasions that they are waiting for. Teachers have carefully considered interesting ways for pupils to record their work, such as writing Easter poems and parables, describing Christmas customs, making labelled, annotated drawings of a church and acting. They use a wide range of resources, including an improved range of artefacts, to make learning more interesting. Planning is done on a whole school basis and is consistent with the agreed syllabus at Key Stage 2, but the level at Key Stage 3 is not at sufficient depth. The school has correctly identified this as a target to improve, as Year 7 work sometimes lacks sufficient challenge for the age and ability of the pupils. The good practice of close links with the local church is under-developed for other faiths.